

LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDING
31ST DECEMBER, 1946.

of
THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH - DR. ALFRED A. MASSER.

Mr. Chairman & Members,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the health of the Penistone District, for the year ending December 31st, 1946. I am including the vital statistics of the area, with notes on infectious diseases, housing, water supply, etc.

General Remarks. The general health of the Penistone Community has remained good during the year 1946. A low incidence of sickness, with no epidemics of note, have been marked throughout.

I must state, however, that the scanty and monotonous diet which prevailed during this period did much to render nervous disorders more prominent, though I found no evidence of any malnutrition among any of the age groups.

There was also evidence of overcrowding in a number of instances; as many as four families being resident in one house having been noted. Inability to find a home has not, however, lowered our birth-rate, which has steadily increased during 1946, and the infantile mortality rate remains low.

Births. The estimated population of Penistone was 5810 in 1946. There were registered during the year 101 live-births, consisting of 53 males and 48 females. Of these, 3 males and 3 females were illegitimate.

I am very pleased to say that this was an increase in births over the previous year, the birth rate being 17.3 per 1,000 of the population. The birth rate for England & Wales was 19.1 per 1,000, a very considerable increase over the war years.

Still Births. For the first time during my tenure of office, there have been no still births recorded. The rate per 1,000 of the recorded births for England & Wales was 0.53 still births.

Infantile Mortality. There were 4 deaths of infants under one year, 2 males and 2 females. All were legitimate. This figure is identical with that of 1945, and gives an infantile mortality rate of 39.6 per 1,000 live births and compares with 43 per 1,000 live births for England & Wales. The figure for Penistone in 1945 was 43 per 1,000, so that our rate is improving.

Deaths. There were 63 deaths registered in 1946, 33 males and 30 females. This figure compares with 75 in 1945, and gives a death rate of 10.8 per 1,000 of the population. The death rate for England & Wales for the same period was 11.5, and that for Penistone in 1945 was 13.2 per 1,000, considerably more than our present figure.

An analysis of the figures shows that 2 males died of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, 10 died of Cancer, 1 died of Diabetes Mellitus, 31 died of diseases of the Heart & Circulation, 6 Bronchitis, 1 Pneumonia, 1 Other Respiratory Disease, 1 female died of a maternal cause other than Puerperal Sepsis, 1 premature birth, 3 Congenital Malformations at birth. One female died from suicide, and 5 from all other causes.

Water. The source of Penistone Water Supply is 4 Artesian Wells and 4 Springs. The supply throughout 1946 has been satisfactory both in quality and quantity.

During the year, 2 chemical and 9 bacteriological examinations were carried out. Of the former, both were satisfactory; of the latter, 7 were satisfactory and 2 doubtful.

/Over.

Infectious Diseases. The total of notified infectious diseases was 75, comprising the following:-

Scarlet Fever	12.
Pneumonia	17.
Respiratory Tuberculosis (New)	6.
Other forms of Tuberculosis	5.
Measles	4.
Whooping Cough	31.

From the above list, it will be seen that Diphtheria was entirely absent, surely the greatest tribute possible to the campaign of immunisation, in which the Penistone population are so enthusiastically playing their part.

During the Whooping Cough epidemic, many children were given the soluble vaccine, with good results.

Milk Supply. No case of disease has been traced to dirty milk, during the year 1946. In spite of this, it is impossible to be sure that occasional cases of infected glands in children and young adults may not have been supplied from this source. Like most of my medical colleagues, I urge the necessity of universal pasteurisation of milk throughout the Country. Then only can we become complacent on the value of our milk.

Housing. Many instances of overcrowding have come to my notice. At present, owing to the acute shortage of houses, nothing can be done, but 1947 and 1948 may be able to alleviate the hardships in the worst of these cases.

Factories Act, 1937. 44 Visits were made to factories during the year. On no occasion was anything of an unsatisfactory nature found.

Nutrition. No case of true malnutrition has received my attention during the year.

In schoolchildren, the efforts of workers in the School Canteens has ensured at least one good, well cooked meal per day.

In our factories, our workers have been similarly supplied with a sufficient and varied menu.

Perhaps the main complaint has been the lack of variety in the diet, with the insufficiency of the little luxuries which go so far to make life more tolerable.

I would safely say, that the nutrition of both our children and adults would well compare with that of the inhabitants of any part of the Country.

Conclusions. The health of this district was never better than it is to-day. Our birth rate has increased and our death rate diminished. The infantile mortality rate has greatly improved, and with it, the maternal mortality rate.

Much must be done in the future of Penistone. Better and larger recreation grounds for our children, a swimming pool, a communal centre for young and old. These, and many other amenities, must come with better times.

Finally, may I sincerely thank the Chairman & Members of the Council for their great help and unfailing courtesy during my tenure of office.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) ALFRED A. MASSER, M.B. Ch.B.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.